

The HEDGE General Information 2008/2009

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(Revised 6/30/08)

The HEDGE

General Information

2008/2009

INTRODUCTION

Our Mission and Our History (who we are):

The HEDGE is a co-operative home education ministry designed to offer an affordable opportunity for local families to join together and share talents and resources to support each other in common educational goals. The group is incorporated in Georgia as *The HEDGE Home School Ministry, Inc.* The acronym forming our name stands for **H**ome **E**ducators **D**evoted to **G**rowth and **E**ncouragement. Our web address is www.hedgeonline.org. Classes meet at Hillside United Methodist Church (UMC) at 4474 Towne Lake Parkway in Woodstock, Georgia 30189.

The HEDGE began at Hopewell Baptist Church in Canton, GA, in the spring of 2003, with our first annual Spring Formal for home-educated high school students as our inaugural event. We began offering a variety of academic and enrichment classes on a co-operative basis in the fall of 2003. In June 2007, The HEDGE relocated to Hillside UMC.

Two of The HEDGE founders continue to direct the group: Ruth Ann Ludden, (General Director,) and Lisa Toney (Administrative Director). Other members of the Advisory Team for 2008/2009 are: Yvonne Bryant, Arlene Neal, Jenny Chittick, Elaine Benson, Cheryl McMekin, Melody Crow and Shelly Hargis. Many parents and HEDGE alumni give leadership in specific areas within the program, such as field trips, special events, academic bees, drama, music, exhibits & performances, ballroom dance/etiquette programs and service projects.

The HEDGE is a discipleship ministry. We are composed of families from many Christian denominations and a variety of local churches. We embrace the Bible as our common authority for faith and conduct. Although we desire the salvation and sanctification of all people, evangelism is not our primary purpose. We endeavor to teach all classes from a conservative Christian perspective, leaving specific faith teaching/training to parents and churches. Parents are required to submit written testimonies of their faith during the interview process. We attempt to include in membership only families who share similar educational and spiritual ideology.

The HEDGE membership includes families living in Woodstock, Marietta, Acworth, Canton, Kennesaw, Holly Springs, Jasper, and Hickory Flat.

What we offer:

- Academic classes taught from a Christian/Biblical perspective
- Labs for science classes with professional lab equipment, microscopes & supplies
- Web Site for posting assignments & information – www.hedgeonline.org
- The HEDGE Academy Yahoo! Group for internal communications
- Socials and celebrations for various ages, classes and groups
- Ballroom dance programs for middle and high school students, including instructional classes, etiquette instruction, informal and formal dances

- Valentine’s Dinner & Dance for parents & HEDGE Alumni
- Annual presentation, exhibit & performance event (Audience of One)
- Individual tutoring by appointment (additional fees may apply)
- Guitar and piano classes (additional fees apply)
- Ballet, tap & jazz classes (additional fees apply)
- National Geographic Geography Bee competition
- Annual Graduation Ceremony & Reception
- Drama presentations for middle & high school students
- Full color, hard bound Yearbook publication
- Individual & class group portraits (available for purchase)
- Senior testing
- Standardized Educational Testing (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) in May
- Field Trips
- Family Learning & Adventure Trips
- Mentoring and advisement for new homeschoolers and special student needs
- Support Group Meetings, including special speakers and topics
- Family Fellowship Events
- College Admissions Information and Advisement
- Community Service Projects
- Specialty classes and workshops
- Historical & Just-for-Fun Special Event & Theme Days
- Information on home education opportunities in our area
- Emergency prayer chain, delivered by email
- New this year – HEDGE Alumni Association
- And new opportunities added each year!

Organization and Operations (how we fulfill our mission):

The HEDGE is not a school. We are a ministry that offers opportunities to local home educating families to join with others to accomplish those aspects of education that are best pursued in a group setting or which are most difficult for many parents to teach. Parents retain full responsibility for the education of their children. Independent education is challenging, even with a good support system. By conducting ourselves according to Biblical principles of relationship, we offer each other the needed assistance, support and encouragement to accomplish mutual goals.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that all students understand and adhere to the HEDGE Participation Guidelines. HEDGE is guided by the General Director, Administrative Director and Advisory Team, with input sought from the whole membership when decisions of magnitude are to be made. One of our goals is to function as an extended “family” to each other, not just provide another activity in which to participate. We have, therefore, a HEDGE Participation Covenant that each family must review and sign prior to participation. We have added a Student Participation Agreement in 2008/09 that must be signed by each student in middle or high school.

Our ability to function depends on each HEDGE family fulfilling their responsibility for a “fair share” of the costs of the program in dollars, time, service and resources. Most of our academic classes, especially for middle and high school, are full-year courses. We ask that

families prayerfully consider their ability to undertake a “fair share” of financial, teaching and service commitments before joining HEDGE. Responsibilities include committing to a minimum of four hours in weekly participation on Teaching Teams, participating in the clean-up rotation equitably, praying for other HEDGE families, sharing talents and resources and being involved in service projects and outreach opportunities.

Financial Information (what HEDGE costs):

Membership in HEDGE requires each family to commit to supporting this ministry in several ways with the primary financial contribution being the Annual Family Participation Fee (AFPF) that pays for general, predictable expenses of the program.

For the 2008/2009 academic year, the Annual Participation Fee is \$300.00 per family. We offer the option of paying the full amount or paying \$250.00 of the AFPF and committing to raise the other \$50.00 through fundraising efforts. If, throughout the course of the school year, our costs exceed our income, families may be asked to participate in fundraisers or to contribute additional funds. All regular lab and materials fees are included in the AFPF, as well as one copy of the full color, hardbound Yearbook, created each year by a group of students under the guidance of a parent team. To put that in perspective, each Yearbook actually costs HEDGE approximately \$40.00. We offer additional copies of the Yearbook for sale for a reduced amount per book, based on our ability to sell ads and cover the remaining expenses through other funds. The AFPF also covers a monthly donation to Hillside UMC to defray costs such as electricity, paper products, copier use, facility maintenance, miscellaneous supplies, etc.

Ballet, tap and jazz dance classes, piano and guitar lessons/classes are available for an additional charge per hour per student (\$5.00 per student per hour). When we utilize a paid instructor to teach a class, extra charges (beyond the basic Annual Participation Fee) apply. *Such fees are paid directly to the instructors involved.* The Admin Team oversees the dance, music and other specialty instructors. These instructors are under the authority of the HEDGE Admin Team and Parent Advisory Board and must adhere to our published Teacher Guidelines, including compliance with our background check requirement.

Each family is responsible for acquiring books, supplies and instruments needed for student education and instruction. We attempt to share resources as much as possible, but we expect teachers to supply their own teaching manuals and materials (including such things as your own dry erase markers). Teachers are encouraged to donate teaching manuals and materials to the group for future use when they finish teaching a class. ***Incidental teacher reimbursements must be pre-approved through the Admin Team.***

SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Teaching:

Each family is required to commit to ***a minimum of four hours of on-campus*** service each week. This four-hour commitment may be served by a combination of in-class teaching or assisting all in one day or broken up into two days. Hillside UMC’s Child Protection Policy requires each class to have two teachers in a room at all times. Exceptions to this requirement must be discussed individually with one of the HEDGE directors.

Cleaning:

Each teacher will be responsible for cleaning his/her own room after each class. This includes wiping down tables and counters with cleaning wipes (provided by HEDGE), erasing white boards, arranging chairs and furniture in their original positions, removing trash from the floor, and vacuuming when needed. We have many students using each room during the day so it is vital that we all do our share to keep each area clean and ready for the next group. ***All shared areas (bathrooms, study rooms, common area, assembly room, hallways, etc.) will be cleaned on a rotating basis by two families each HEDGE day.*** For those who choose not to fulfill this requirement, a payment option will be offered.

We ask that each family sign up for 3 or more Cleaning Duty Rotations each year. Two families serve in this capacity at the end of each HEDGE Day. This takes about 1.5 – 2 hours to complete. If you would prefer, you may pay \$25.00 per Cleaning Duty Rotation to hire another HEDGE family to fulfill this responsibility for you. We maintain a list of those who would like to earn extra money in this way.

Signing a Covenant:

As a prerequisite to HEDGE membership *each year*, parents are asked to sign a published agreement specifying expectations of parents during the year. This document is available on our website (www.hedgeonline.org) for review and the signed Covenants are kept on file with the Admin Team.

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